

BLOG FROM RORY MURPHY, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR, VINCI FACILITIES

# LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR WELLBEING

**W**ill 2018 finally be the year that Wellbeing and the Health element of Health & Safety breakthrough into the mainstream debate within FM and the built environment.

One could argue that there is a lot of talk about wellbeing, but generally focusses on what happens in our clients' workplaces. We need to look at the business of FM. For as an industry that prides itself on maintaining and operating assets in their peak condition to ensure optimum performance we have maybe been slow to realise the necessity to also use that expertise on our human capital.

We know what happens to our physical assets if we run them above their peak capacity for long periods of time. If we don't have a dedicated and planned maintenance regime then failure is inevitable. However, the obvious link to managing our people seems far more difficult to grasp.

The headline breakthrough in 2017 was in removing the taboo around mental health. Princes Harry and William openly talked about their own struggles and this was followed by high profile celebrities from Sport, TV and Film. In our own sector we had Owen Gower bravely posting his experiences on LinkedIn which brought the debate on mental health closer to home and more so because it was delivered by 'one of our own'.

Statistics tell us that one in four of us will be experiencing a mental health problem at any one time. Worse, nine in ten people coping with mental health problems have faced negative treatment from others as a result. The physical

human toll is too high, but it is estimated that 70-million work days are lost due to mental health in the UK every year: one in seven of those being directly caused by a person's work or working conditions.

Absence is only part of the story, research by the Sainsbury Centre for mental health suggests that 'Presenteeism' accounts for 1.5 times as much working time lost as absenteeism and costs more to employers because it is more common among higher-paid staff

Initiatives like 'Time to Change' looks to raise awareness of mental health issues with support from central Government and charities such as Mind and Rethink Mental illness. The 'Time to Change' initiative calls for wellbeing champions who can challenge stigma in their communities by running activities and events where they speak about their experience and pass on knowledge.

The wellbeing challenge though is a fantastic opportunity for anyone that works within FM and the built environment to influence and change thinking. We will all need to improve the way we manage and support our own teams in terms of process and systems, but it is in the physical environment that we need to take the lead. Perhaps we need to rethink our priorities?

It would be easy to talk generically about how FM can support the wider 'workplace' debate, but let's look at how we deal with our own employees first. How expert are we in managing the health and wellbeing of our own teams? We are a crucial support industry employing people to look after



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key assets often on a 24-hr basis, we work to strict protocols, we have stringent compliance targets and we frequently work to multiple performance mechanisms. The management teams in our businesses have targets and objectives to achieve and we all work in an incredibly competitive environment.

Supporting our teams, setting stretching but achievable targets, being clear about responsibilities is a good place to start. The necessity to have regular one to ones at every level where discussions about wellbeing can be aired with ease are an obvious next step. The physical environment within which our teams operate and ensuring everyone feels safe and respected at work and has the right tools to do their jobs should complete the set.

Wellbeing is not just a discussion for us to be having with our customers. It is about our own people. Demonstrating that concern, having the discussion and improving the physical, practical and emotional support for our own teams should be a showcase for how we could support our customers in delivering their own improvements.

## CHILDREN'S HEART SURGERY FUND AND THE 'BIG YELLOW TRUCK'



**B&M Waste Services has started to promote its nominated charity, Children's Heart Surgery Fund, on the side of its Leeds-based bin collection vehicle.**

Children's Heart Surgery Fund supports children and adults born with congenital heart defects across Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire and promoting the charity on the side of B&M Waste's iconic big yellow trucks further assists spreading awareness of the valuable work the charity facilitates.

Commercial General Manager for B&M Waste Services, Amber Greenhalgh commented: "Raising the profile of our nominated charity through utilising the billboard which is our 'big yellow trucks' is a great way to assist them in raising awareness. They work to support children and the families of those born with congenital heart disease, and are highly deserving of our support."

The iconic yellow waste collection vehicles can be seen across the West Yorkshire region, where they offer Carbon-Neutral recycling and waste management to businesses, with zero waste to landfill as their goal.

Sharon Coyle, CEO of Children's Heart Surgery Fund said: "It's great to have the support of such an ethical company, they really have gone all out to assist us in the work that we do, including the recent promotion of the charity free of charge on their Leeds vehicle!"